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The Washington Merry-go-round

FBI AS SCROOGE: Thumbing its nose at a federal judge's decision, the FBI has effectively denied access to its files on the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations to a respected critic of the Warren Commission.

The critic, Harold Weisberg, 67 and ailing, has written seven books on the assassinations. In 1978, Judge Gerhard Gesell ruled that Weisberg, whose only regular income is Social Security benefits, qualified for a waiver of duplicating fees for the FBI files.

But now, the bureau has told Weisberg he must pay for document copies — knowing he can't afford it. Cynically, the FBI said Weisberg can look at records in the agency's reading room — though it knows also that a progressively disabling circulatory ailment makes the 50-mile trip fom his Maryland home both painful and dangerous.